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AMERICAN LEGATION

★ DAMASCUS ★

Daily Review of the Syrian Press

The following is an informal digest of material from the local Arabic Press, and is in no way to be considered as an official translation. It should not be quoted nor attributed to the Legation.

No. 39. (FOR STAFF USE ONLY)

PRESS DIGEST, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1949.

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NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alif Ba', ~~Al Naer~~, Al Fayha', Al Balad, ~~al Manar~~, Al Alam, Barada, Al Nazir, Al Shabab, Al Duha', Al Jabal, Al Insha', al Kifah, Al Wabas, and al-Ayyam.

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ARAB AFFAIRS.

AN AHC MEMBER'S ARRIVAL IN DAMASCUS:

Al Kifah: Ahmad Shuqayri, the representative of the Palestinian Arabs, has arrived in Damascus on a two-day mission with the competent authorities,

REPLIES TO DR. BUNCHE'S INVITATION:

Al Balad: In the recent Syro-Lebanese talks conducted in Beirut a joint reply had been drafted and presented to Dr Bunche's

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Bunche's to his invitation to Rhodes truce negotiations with the Jews.

Although the contents of the reply is still kept secret there are indications that the two Governments have flatly refused truce negotiations with the Jews in Rhodes on the ground that the Jews are the actual aggressors on the Lebanese frontier, and the looters of the Lebanese villages; and on the ground that the Lebanese forces stationed along the frontier have respected the Security Council's cease-fire orders and stopped all warfare military activities. The reply suggests, therefore, that the frontier matters be solved locally with the evacuation of all the Jewish forces of the areas occupied inside the Lebanese frontier. With regards to Syria, the reply insists that the Syrian Army forces be maintained in Mishmar Hayarden to secure the Syrian frontier from possible Jewish aggressions. In view of the existing truce, the reply finds no justification for the conduction of truce negotiations in Rhodes.

RIYAD AL SULH VERY OPTIMIST:

Al Balad: Immediately after the adjournment of the 3rd Syro-Lebanese meeting in Beirut, Prime Minister of Lebanon Riyad Bey al Sulh made a statement to the press in which he expressed his satisfaction with the mutual understanding which has overwhelmed the meeting, and particularly with the extent of the Syrian Government's readiness for the understanding of the Lebanese viewpoints, a spirit "which had never been witnessed before since the death of Sa'ad-Allah al Jabiri,"

BARAZI IN CAIRO:

Al Kifah: Minister of Public Instruction Muhsin Bey Barazi has left for Cairo reportedly on a special mission envoid by the Syrian Government, possibly to discuss with the competent Arab authorities on Arab Affairs.

THE FUTURE OF INQAZ ARMY:

Al Bayna': From reliable sources our reporter learns that communications between the Arab States over the future of the Inqaz Army is under way, and that it was the topic of conversation between Khalid al Azm and Riyad al-Sulh. There are all indications that this army will be placed under the supervision and the finance of the Arab League.

COMMENTS

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COMMENTS RE-EGYPTO-ISRAELI TRUCE AGREEMENT:

On week end Damascus papers bitterly criticized the Arab Governments and leaders placing them responsible for the actual tragedies of Palestine and for the truce-agreement which was signed by the Egyptians and the Jews in Rhodes on Thursday, February 24, 1949.

Editor Najib al-Rayyis calls the defeat a "morale," and not a military one and writes in his paper, al Qabas inter alia:

It is most shamful and painful that the Arabs are individually loosing the battle morally, and not militarily, and financially. The responsible Arab leaders, Kings, princes, Ministers, and deputies have been morally defeated in front of the Jews whose potentialities and forces are inferior to those of the Arabs, they have lost the battle with the loss of confidence in themselves... What a shame!.....

By commenting on the truce agreement reached in Rhodes we do not mean to criticize Egyptians, and their courageous army, but desire to point out that with the signature of the truce agreement in Rhodes the Arabs have registered their "morale defeats" which is effecting all of us.

We pity the inhabitants of Palestine who were incited by the speeches of the Arab Commanders and leaders to continue the struggle. It is time for them to say to the Arab Kings, leaders, Chiefs, and ministers that "if you are unable to protect us, leave the field to us."

Under a picture showing the Great Conquerer of the Crusades Salah-al-Din al Ayyubi parading the departure of all the defeated European armies from Jerusalem, Barada writes the following and inquires: We hoped that last Thursday, Feb. 24, would be the day similar to that when Salah-al-Din conquered the Crusaders of Palestine.... But where is the Salah-al-Din of this generation, and where is the Army of Salah-al-Din?...

Similarly al-Ayyam of Sunday Feb 27, goes deeper into the subject under a "Black Day" as a title of the column. After admitting that all the Arab States are responsible for what has been concluded in Rhodes between the Jews and the Egyptian, it warns the Syrian and the Lebanese Government of the threats insinuated by Moshe Shertuk, and writes in part:

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We would like to point out the danger hidden behind the Rhodes negotiations and confronting the Arabs. By negotiating with the Egyptians individually, the Jews have succeeded in seeding dissension among the Arabs. They have also approached the Sa'udi Arabian Kingdom with a view of conducting similar talks. Arabia, nevertheless has declined finding no justification for such talks, as "its boundaries are not adjacent with that of Israel."

There are all indications that the Transjordan Kingdom has accepted conducting truce negotiations with Israel, and has decided to commence such talks on Monday Feb. 28, when a delegation will proceed to Rhodes.

Being the only States refusing talks with Israel, Syria and Lebanon have been probably meant by the statement of Shertuk when he said that "Israel refuses talks with two Arab States."

Shertuk has taken such a counter-action when he realized the determination of Syria and Lebanon not to enter truce talks. The two Governments must give to these insinuated "threats" their utmost concern and prepare for any action which the Jews might be preparing for them, now that they have ensured safety on the side of the Egyptians and are ensuring the 'support' of Transjordan.

The two countries are called upon cooperation against the confronting dangers which might result from the negotiation in Rhodes.

Although too late in publishing the text of the Agreement reached between the Egyptian and the Jews in Rhodes and signed cermoniously on Thursday, Feb 24, 1949 Al Alam warns the Arabs of more calamatuous tragedies in the hands of the leaders and the hands of those who claim leadership !!! if they do not prepare for a decisive action.

Columnist Zuhayr al - Kuzbari, describing the agreement of Rhodes as being the "Document of Defeat" writes the following inter alia in al rayha':

There is no doubt that signing the Rhodes agreement is a new historical incident which foretells serious and principal changes in the military and diplomatic map of the Middle East. The Arab States are no more that important political element which American and British policy imagined and respected..... To-day we try to console ourselves that we have lost the fist round of

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the battle. In fact, we lost the whole war, All that talk about preparations being made for the future is only a subject of contempt and scorn. They will continue to be so as long as the methods which made us lose the war are being repeated every day on the stage of internal and external policy of the Arab countries.

NERVE WAR WAGED AGAINST SYRIA:

Al Nasr: A Cairo report of the ANA states that the AL has received word that the Zionist are concentrating their forces in Northern Galilee along the Syrian boundary, and that food and war material are pouring every day into Israel. An Arab pilot has informed the AL that he saw from the air about 16 ships proceeding to Palestinian harbors.

INVITATION TO RHODES REFUSED:

Barada: Prime Minister Khalid al-'Azm declined yesterday from replying to Barada correspondent's question about the attitude toward the invitation to Rhodes extended to Syria and Lebanon. But political circles in the Capital say, according to the same correspondent, that Syria will not accept Bunche's invitation.

WORLD AFFAIRS

US ORGANIZING WORLD ESPOINAGE ACTIVITIES:

Al Fayha': published a report dateline Washington 26, to the effect that the "Saturday Evening Post" has recently reported the extent of the American Espoinage Activities in the Middle East organized under the name of "General Information Agency" offices. The weekly magazine reports that the agents of the "Central Information Agency" played an important role in the Palestine warefare when they used to report to Washington on preparations by the Arabs in Palestine and actions weeks before their occurances.

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ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

CONSIDERATION OF FRANCO-SYRIAN MONETARY AGREEMENT:

Alif Ba': In order to carry out its studies of the Agreement referred to it, the National Economy Committee of Parliament has requested from the Government the following documentary materials:

1- Documents and decrees relative to the establishment of Banque de Syrie et du Liban, particularly the decisions of the French High Commissioners regarding the covering and issue of the Syrian currency.

2- Breakdown of the immovable French properties in Syria estimated at 7,120,000 Francs.

3- Para (2) of Supplement (b) of the Agreement regarding military necessaries.

4- Documents relative to the "Telephone Service" which the French claim ownership.

5- What is the amount of rare currency which the French guaranteed to reimburse in accordance with Supplement 5 of the Monetary Agreement?

SYRIAN-TAPLINE AGREEMENT:

Alif Ba': The National Economy Committee of the Parliament also requested the Government to supply the following:

1- Agreement and all appendixes of the Agreement existent between the Syrian Government and the Iraq Petroleum Company Ltd.

2- The Text of the TAPLINE Agreement and all its appendixes.

PARTY POLICIES RE-TAPLINE:

Al Nasr: The Parliamentary Bloc of the People's Party has sent two copies of each of the TAPLINE and the Currency Agreements to the Lawyers' Syndicate in Aleppo and asked their opinion with respect to these two agreements.

Al-Shabab: The Nationalist Party branch in Aleppo has invited all the chiefs and reporters of its various committees to a meeting today (Feb.25) to conduct technical studies of the TAPLINE Agreement. Editors of Aleppo papers belonging to the Party will also attend the meeting. The whole agreement will be analyzed to the public at a general meeting to be held after the meetings of the Committees.

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Al Nidal: The People's Party Office in Damascus was yesterday crowded with a large group of deputies, statesmen, youth, and students who came to listen to the lecture of our good friend, Akram Hawrani, Hama deputy, on TAPLINE agreement recently submitted by the Government to the House for ratification.

In detail, our colleague Hawrani spoke about the evils and dangers which will result from the ratification of the agreement. The distinguished deputy spoke bravely and clearly about the hidden hands which played and continues to play for the ratification of the unlucky agreement. He submitted to his listners absolute proofs on the erronuous policy of the responsible authorities, which enable the colonization to exploit the country's resources in return to a royalty which is trifle if compared with the country's future.

Opposition to TAPLINE:

Al Manar and Al Nidal today pronounce themselves against TAPLINE. Editor Kabbara writes editorially in Al Nidal:

America has left isolation. It openly endeavors to interfere in the affairs of the East and the West having as objective to dominate world resources, and particularly petroleum. If it is arriving now to this objective in peaceful methods it shall not hesitate in future to enter in an armed fight to attain it if necessary. America is fully prepared to reveal its true face if armed fight could guarantee and defend its interests.

The hidden war between America and England has ended by the victory of the American capitalism. The retreat of the British capitalism, and its subjugation to its American competitor.

The monopolyzing US capitalism strives to extend its nets to establish its foothold in the Middle East. The open door policy called for President Truman should put the world on the alert for America shall not only use its economic forces but its military ones too to dictate its policy.

And we in turn open the doors wide for American companies' penetration?...

On the other hand, Al Manar writes:

The allegation that TAPLINE agreement is merely an economic project is false. Only last year we rejected the agreement for the sake of Palestine and because the Arab world agreed on following a unified petroleum policy, considering that that will help them to reach their objective in liberating Palestine. However, some Governments could not use this weapon because the golden chain was so heavy that they could not act freely. TAPLINE, therefore, is not...

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is not an economic chain but a political one too, for all countries which benefitted from American economic chains under the name of lend-lease or of Marshall Plan subjugated themselves to the American policy.

Furthermore, this concession is a chain of concessions. The TAPLINE was not satisfied with the extension of pipelines across Syria, but also the agreement authorizes it to establish railways, tramways, streets, aerodromes, electric generators, and also: the Agreement also provides for, "other works". All these things cannot be considered as only one economic agreement. It is in fact a document of economic imperialism. How can this agreement be referred to the Chamber of deputies at a time the competent authorities plan to nationalize foreign companies and save the country the evils of concessionary companies? This agreement provides for the creation of a big state in the lap of an infant state.

In addition, Syria is not going to benefit much out of the TAPLINE. It is not true that the Company is going to establish harbors, trams, railways, The only work which will be accomplished is the extension of pipeline and few stations here and there. All the work will be accomplished by heavy machinery and hence only a handful of laborers will be employed. Of course, there will be maintained some stations, but they will be mainly used for spying. It is funny that in return to all these concessions, Syria would raceive only 20,000 Sterling in return to the passage of 13 million tons and 40,000 Sterling in return to protection. The results, if TAPLINE is ratified, will be too serious. In addition to the expected subjugation of Syria to the US, our country will be the target of future air raids considering that Petroleum installations are usually the first to be destroyed in wars.

ECONOMIC AGREEMENT WITH LEBANON:

Alif Ba': The economic talks between the Syrian and the Lebanese authorities recently conducted in Lebanon have resulted with a complete understanding on all issues. In return to the Syrian decision to permit export of wheat to Lebanon, the Lebanese authorities have taken a decision to stop the import of wheat from France. The two parties have reached a compromise agreement regarding the liquidation of MIRA and the division of the profits.

PETROLEUM RESOURCES IN PALMYRA:

Al Nasr: This paper publishes a report datelined Homs to the effect that the Gendarmerie at Sakhanah Village have discovered a petroleum well at the home of a certain farmer there, who has

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kept the existence of this well as a secret for many years. Chief of Security outpost there visited the place and reported to the authorities asking for the dispatch of technical engineers to see the place.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

DR. ATASI TO PARIS:

Al Nasr: Delegated on six-months special mission to Paris and Madrid, Dr. 'Adnan al-Atasi conferred for 1½ hours with the Prime Minister. After the interview, Dr. Atasi is reported to have declared his intention to leave for Paris on Tuesday next, eight days hence.

SUSPENSION OF AL MANAR:

Al Nasr: A decree was issued suspending al Manar for 15 days. It published articles which may poison our good relations with some sister-states.

MURDER IN THE DESERT:

Al Nasr: Three unidentified persons assassinated Jadwaf al-Hamada after having dispossessed him of his sheep, according to a report from the Officer of Dayr-al-Zor Tribes to the authorities.

Investigation proved that the aggressors belonged to the 'Anzah tribe, and that they fled to the East leaving behind the stolen sheep.

SYRIAN OFFICERS' DISCONTENT:

Al Kifah: The Army Information Service has expressed the Syrian Army officers disapproval and discontent with the accusations addressed against them in the local press regarding the latest embezzlements in the Ministry of National Defense The Service conveys to the press the officers' desire that they wait for the results of the trials presently conducted regarding those accusations.

SILVER

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SILVER AND GOLD TO THE JEWS OF ALEPPO:

Al Nazir: Having learned of the arrival of a quantity of silver blocks, and a number of gold sovereign pounds, the Syrian Police in Aleppo raided the shop of Moise Jamal a Jewish merchant in Khan al-Gumrok, the main commercial center of Aleppo. About 3 tons of silver and 1000 golden Pounds have been found in the possession of Isra Kabbani, manager of the shop, they have been confiscated pending the receipt of the documents relative to this shipment, which Kabbani alleged were in Beirut with the proprieter, Moise Jamal. It is worth mentioning that Mr. Jamal has presented half-a-million Pound guarantee for the release of the 'shipment'.

CENSORSHIP OF TELEPHONES ABOLISHED:

Al Kifah: The Ministry of National Defense has suggested to the Council of Minister the abolition of censorship imposed on telephone conversation between Hauran and other parts of Syria in view of the termination of all reasons which has necessitated such measures.

FINANCE MINISTRY SUGGESTS ABOLITION OF MIRA:

Al Kifah: In a letter to the Council of Ministers the Ministry of Finance suggests the complete abolition of Mira the Wheat Monopoly Organization.

JEWS FLEEING FROM DAMASCUS:

Barada: According to this paper's reporter, the movement of smuggling Jewish wealth has appeared clearly during the past two weeks in the Jewish quarter of Damascus. Many Jews have also sold the furniture of their houses leaving in them only the essential simple utensils. This movement is accompanied by another movement of smuggling of people to Palestine. 'Azur Salin and his wife, and Ayn al-'Utabi and others are reported to have arrived in Palestine with their wealth. The way to Palestine according to Barada is via Homs to Ba'albak in Lebanon and then with the help of certain people they infiltrate into Jewish controlled areas of Palestine.

DUTCH

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DUTCH PLANES THROUGH SYRIA?

Barada: Director-General of Dutch Aviation Company in the ME, Mr. Van Olndburg has arrived in Damascus, reportedly, he will meet the official authorities in the Syrian Capital to discuss the question of permitting civilian dutch planes to pass through Syria and land at its airports.

NO EXEMPTION FROM MILITARY SERVICE:

Barada: The Ministry of Defence has decided, and notified the Ministry of Interior accordingly, to exempt no person from the military service under any circumstances, including draftees from the tribes. The decision was communicated to all the Muhafazas. The Muhafizin have been instructed to convene the compulsory service committees to implement this measure, and to examine draftees of the tribes born in 1929

FREE EXPORT TO LEBANON:

Al Nasr: The Ministry of National Economy has decided to abolish article 3 of Decision 26 of February 14, 1949, and to permit the free unlicensed transfer of wheat, flour, barley, and their products. This decision was conveyed to the competent departments for execution.

NATIONALIST PARTY TO MEET:

Al Fayha': The Secretary General of the Nationalist Party, Sabri al-Asali, has extended invitations to the members of the Damascus branch of the Party to a meeting at 7 p.m. tomorrow (Monday, Feb. 28, 1949) to discuss the present internal and external situation of the country.

FOUR SUSPECTED AMERICAN OFFICERS:

Al Manar: Under ambiguous front page headlines, the Moslem Brotherhood organ reports that the gendarmerie stopped four American officers, two in the rank of major and two in the rank of captain when they arrived in Qutayfa last thursday in the company of an Arab interpreter. Questioned by the Gendarmes on the purpose of this trip, the four stated they were proceeding to Ma'aloula for a visit. The Gendarmes promptly communicated with Damascus and received orders to check their passports and circulation permits. The interpreter only showed the gendarmes a document in English permitting them to stay one week in Damascus, and undated.

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The four officers suddenly returned in their car to Damascus. Security officials and gendarmes were consequently instructed to be on the alert.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT TO THE PRESS:

Al Nasr: The Prime Minister is reported to have made the following statement to the reporters of the press at his office yesterday (Feb. 27) noon:

The Conferences held in Beirut between representatives of Syria and Lebanon dealt with political and economic discussions, and they were more economic than political. We have considered together the establishment of a new system for the common interests of our two countries. Our discussions on this subject were of general nature only; no details were studied. Discussions will be resumed in another meeting to be held shortly.

Our relations with Lebanon have two sides: first, general relations for which new principles will be established in the light of previous experience, and for which we shall in agreement make firm rules so that they will run smoothly and frankly. The other relations are the common ones, and for these, two, we shall define the rules of partnership in administration and exploitation, owing to the clear benefits arising from maintaining this partnership.

The Common Interests Agreement of 1944 expired in 1947 and was automatically renewed since neither party asked for its cancelation. It will continue to be in force until the end of 1949, and either party has the right to ask the cancellation of this agreement during June next. It is now understood that both parties are benefitting from their collaboration, and therefore these affairs will be better organized and clarified in order to maintain the will of cooperation between the two countries.

Syria is now conducting economic and commercial talks with some Arab and foreign countries aiming at concluding commercial agreements with those countries. This will guarantee the progress of Syrian economy. The Ministry of National Economy is charged to accomplish these talks.

Although the Tapline agreement was signed by the previous government, we had lengthy discussions with the Company which resulted in important amendments in the substance. The word is now for the House of Parliament.

The Joint

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The Joint Committee representing Syria, TJ, Sa'udi Arabia has completed its study and reported on the subject of repairing the Hijaz Railway. We are still ready to exhaust all our possibilities to materialize this vital project. I believe the two sister-states are as anxious to make the project a success

The AL Council has not yet decided where to hold its March session. Contacts are taking place between the various states and the AL Secretariat to prepare the agenda of the session.

The AL Charter which was formulated when the AL was founded was the least that could have been agreed upon at that time. It is expected that this Charter develop side by side with the development of time and the bad need for creating a strong unified Arab world, with one aim and plan in its foreign and internal affairs. Thus the Charter will be a large one comprising all the aims which the Arab world meant in its unification, progress, and stressing its word in international policy.

The AL is now in need of enlarging its activities and organizing them in the light of experiences of the past four years.

This enlargement of the organization must comprise all subjects common to all the Arab states in the fields of culture, unification of legal methods, enlargement of economic collaboration, means of communications, customs, as well as military affairs.

Special agreements between two of the Al States are essential to strengthen brotherly relations, provided these agreements do not shake the being of the AL and its Charter. Syria has started to conduct talks to conclude such agreements on the common interests between Syria and 'Iraq. The subject of discussion in the organization of railways between the two countries.

Our contacts in the field of international politics are being conducted in natural ways, and aim at serving our interests. For no country can in the present circumstances isolate itself in front of the continal international developments. It is well known that the world is now divided into two blocs, and every person knows where his interests and future lies, our attitude toward the two blocs are well known also.

I have read the declarations of the Turkish and Greek

Premiers

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Premiers on the subject of forming a Mediterranean Pact. We have not been officially notified of this subject. Syria welcomes any project whose final aim is the preservation of peace.

The Syrian Government is studying the formation of its delegation to the April extraordinary session of the United Nations. Contacts are taking place between Syria and the other Arab countries to unify Arab plan in this session.

MOVIES THIS WEEK:

DIMASHQ:	The Return of Monte Cristo (Columbia)	Louis Hayward Barbara Britton
AHRAM:	HOMECOMING (MGM)	Clark Gable Anne Baxter Lana Turner John Hodiak
DUNIA:	The Upturned Glass (Eagle Lion)	James Mason.
AIDA	The Big Sleep	Humphray Bogart Laurin Bacall.

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PRESS DIGEST, TUESDAY, MARCH, 1, 1949.

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DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

TAPLINE WITH LAWYERS SYNDICATE:

Alif Ba': The People's Party's Parliamentary Bloc had sought the opinion of the Aleppo Lawyers' Association about the Tapline Agreement. The Association formed a Committee to study the bill.

While such requests are considered traditional by the Association, the Committee argued, and while this action had many precedents, the Committee has decided to decline the Parliamentary Bloc's request on the basis that the short time at their disposal and the lack of sources make their study far from being full. The Committee has charged the Chief of the Syndicate to convey this decision to the Parliamentary Bloc with the utmost regret.

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FUAD MARDAM'S CASE DEVELOPS:

Barada: Our special correspondent states from reliable sources that Fu"ad Mardam who is now being tried by the Military tribunal had purchased before his arrest 500 shares from the Cairo "Al-Sharq Insurance Company" at £E. 100 a share. An official investigating committee will probably go to Cairo to investigate this matter and find out the date of purchase.

ALEPPO COLLUSIONS:

Al Balad: Sixteen persons have been detained after their practical collaboration in the aggressive movements on the 'Iraqi Consulate in Aleppo a week ago has been proved. Investigation showed that they are all affiliated in the secret Communist Party, and that they are responsible for the distribution of communist tracts since the issue of the Palestine partition scheme.

A certain Ahmad Skayf has been arrested with inviting tracts in his possession. Investigation is going on to discover the co-llaborators.

REPORT DENIED:

Al Balad: The War Information Office has styled as false the report of al Masri, Egyptian daily, that documents belonging to the United Nations Staff in Damascus have been stolen by an unindentified person at the Orient Palace.

EMBEZZLEMENT EVERYWHERE!..

Al Sabah: Inspection in the Revenues Department of the Damascus Finance Office discovered some playing with the figures. It is said that investigation will charge two officials of the department. Their service may immediately be suspended with their reference to the Disciplinary Committee prior to their trial in court.

NEW

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NEW CURRENCY NOTES TO BE ISSUED:

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Alif Ba': A responsible official of the Ministry of Finance says that the Government has prepared the necessary plans to issue new currency notes in replacement of the old ones of 1924. The new notes, the official goes on to say, will have the same shape as the old ones, but will not have the statement "bearer will be issued a cheque on Paris...." printed on. The issue of golden pounds has been postponed until all necessities are prepared.

PALESTINIANS TO STUDY GRATIS:

Alif Ba': A republican decree was issued yesterday establishing 45 scholarships to Palestinian students at the Syrian Universities. This decree exempts the 45 students from all fees and University expenses, and authorizes the appropriation of LS. 60 monthly to each one of them. The scholarship is granted for a period of one year, renewable at the discretion of the Dean of the University.

PEOPLE'S PARTY MOUTHPIECE:

To-day appears the first issue of Al Sha'b (The People), the mouth piece of the People's Party. The responsible publisher is Shakir al-'As, former Counselor at the Syrian Legation in Paris, and the editor is Ahmad 'Assih, former co-editor of Al Kifah and al Nasr. Publisher Shakir al-'as editorially writes under the heading "This is our mission to the People.":

The People's Party has decided to issue this paper with the hope: (1) to enlighten Syrian and Arab public opinion by giving facts and incidents without any alteration or forgery. Syria has for long lived under the pressure of the authorities, and the free minority has been going through hard circumstances of suppression. (2) to defend essential freedoms, particularly that of thought. The Syrian people is invited to continue its struggle to free itself from internal despotism and from being the tool in the hand of groups or individuals; (3) to prepare the people for a complete coup and putting an end to the present evils. The only means to fulfill this aim is by nationally and politically educate the greatest number of individuals possible.

The Palestine question has revealed the true faces of those who control the Arab nation. It also revealed the disaster threatening Syria, not only its independence but also its very being. This fate is waiting all classes of the people, since Zionist greeds assisted by Imperialism aim at the expulsion of the Arabs from the Mediterranean shores.

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shores.

The People is confronted with many obstacles to repel this danger and secure the being and independence of Syria. Continuous work, sacrifice, and unification can only raise the standard of our country to that of the modern world.

The People's party calls on the people to unify its word, organize its lines, faithfully accept sacrifice and privation, to repel the dangers threatening it, and materialize its hopes.

AMERICAN SQUADRON OVER SYRIA:

Al Sha'b: This paper gives prominence to the report that the US has declared its intention to send 76 war planes to the Syrian skies. Within a frame in the middle of the first page, the paper says that the US Government has obtained the approval of the Syrian Government for granting passage of the said planes, but apologized for not informing it about the destination and reason for passage of the said planes.

TAX ON MERCHANTS:

Al Sha'b: Our reporter learns that the Government will impose a duty tax of half-a-pound on every dollar obtained by merchants from the Exchange Office since 1943.

STUDENTS DISAPPROVAL:

Al Sha'b: The students of the Syrian University have discussed the agreements of the Tapline and Currency and decided to go on strike to-day (March 1) in protest against the contents of the two agreements. They have also prepared a pamphlet for distribution to the deputies and for the information of public opinion about the bad consequences that will arise from the ratification of the Tapline and xxx from the recognition of the legality of the French concessions without Parliament's approval.

ARAB AFFAIRS.

FLYING RESTRICTIONS:

Alif Ba': A note from the Lebanese Foreign Office informs

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the Syrian Office that the Lebanese Government has withdrawn the licence granted to the Czechoslovak Airlines to l and at Lebanese aerodromes, thereby discontinuing Beirut-Prague service. This measure was taken, the note remarks, in retaliation for the establishment of a Prague-Haifa airline via Rome.

Another note from the AL Secretariat states that the 'Iraqi Government has prohibited Dutch airplanes from flying over its territory or landing in its airports, by withdrawing the licence.

The two notes were referred to the Prime Ministry for consideration and similar action.

NEXT WEEK TALKS FORETOLD:

Alif Ba': It is expected that foreign and Arab diplomatic activity in Damascus will show up next week. Syro-'Iraqi talks for a political and economic agreement will be the most outstanding, although the nature of this political agreement is still unknown from official sources.

It is believed in Arab departments however that this political agreement will include some military and common defense affairs. This conforms, the paper remarks, with the Prime Minister's statement that Syria "welcomes any project for the restoration of peace."

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AMERICAN LEGATION

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Daily Review of the Syrian Press

The following is an informal digest of material from the local Arabic Press, and is in no way to be considered as an official translation. It should not be quoted nor attributed to the Legation.

No. 40. (FOR STAFF USE ONLY)

PRESS DIGEST, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 1949.

NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alif Ba', Al Nasr, Al Fayha', al Balad, Al Manar, Al Alam, Barada, Al Nazir, Al Shabab, Al Duha' al Jabal, Al Insha', al Kifah, Al Qabas, al Ayyam, and al Sha'b.

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DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

FOREIGN LEGATIONS DEAL IN BLACK MARKET:

Al Qabas: certain responsible circles learnt that some foreign legations have been selling money drafts in the black market without reference to the exchange Office. This matter was referred to the Foreign Office to call the attention of members of the Diplomatic Corps to the necessity of cashing their drafts through the Foreign Exchange Office.

STUDENTS' DISAPPROVAL OF TAPLINE:

Al Sha'b: The students yesterday went on strike in protest

against

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against the Tapline and Currency Agreements. Government took necessary precautions and placed a police force on the roads leading to the Syrian University. In the prescribed time for the nominal and social demonstration, the students were deprived by the Police of the right to reach their colleges. They gathered together in the main road near the University, and walked in peaceful demonstration carrying posters warning against the bad consequences that will arise from the ratification of the Tapline. When the demonstrators wanted to proceed to the main roads after crossing Hijaz Street, they were scattered by the Police and five students were arrested and later released at noon.

The rumor that the Ministry of Public Instruction has suspended studies at the various colleges of the University has been denied by the Director of Police and Public Security who said "no such decision has been taken, colleges are open to students as usual.

TAPLINE TRYING TO CHEAT SYRIA!

Al Sha'b: Commenting on the report of Al Ayyam that the Tapline representatives in the US had cabled their agents here that the amendment introduced by the Syrian Government to the original agreement does not conform with the interests of the Company requesting more negotiations to exclude the amendment, Al Sha'b writes:

It would not be strange if such rumors are circulated by the Tapline itself, having seen, together with the Government, a wave of dissatisfaction with the agreement and its consequences. Their aim in circulating this rumor is to show up the agreement as extremely generous that their superiors thought it was too much, and that the Government has been very clever to obtain the best of terms. Such rumors, the paper continues, will not deceive any body.

Al Sha'b's correspondent says that the Parliamentary committees charged with the consideration of the Tapline and Currency agreements have not yet held one meeting in which all members were present, because the deputies are away from the Capital. The Speaker extended telegraphic invitations to the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee to listen to the statements of the Prime Minister Saturday (March [illegible]) morning. Therefore, no report from any one of the committees will be submitted to the House on Saturday, but may be delayed on week.

The People's

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The People's Party's Deputies in Aleppo are now seeking the opinion of specialists among the citizens in the two agreements, as well as the opinions of the Lawyers' Syndicate and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. The deputies will hold conferences with the members of these associations to discuss the two agreements.

Al Sha'b: A lecture on the "Political Significance of the Tapline" will be delivered by 'Abd-al-Rahman al Mardini at the Arab Resurrection Party's Club at 5 p.m. Thursday, February 3. A great number of young men and students have been invited to listen.

WORLD AFFAIRS.

NEUTRALITY IN EMINENT THIRD WAR URGED:

Barada: Registering scepticism in the Anglo-American Camp, editor Munir al-Rayyis writes in part:

I do not believe that the Arab leaders and commanders ignore the fact that only a few months after the outbreak of the third war our country will be occupied by the Russian troops as it is evident that Britain and America cannot possibly reinforce the Middle East with the millions of soldiers to stop this invasion. With the future of the Middle East clear in our minds, why do the Arabs attach their future and interests to the Anglo-American camp and thus win the animosity of the Soviets which will naturally consider our country hostile territory?

It will be, therefore, logical to declare our neutrality toward both conflicting camps and unify our forces to confront any emergencies, and should one of the Camps attack and occupy our lands, we would then be treated as a neutral country, and not as belligerent.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS.

AN EYE ON CURRENCY AGREEMENT:

Al Sha'b: Analyzing the Currency Agreement with special

reference

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reference to the statement made by the Government that the agreement was "confined to the liquidation of the pending currency and financial affairs, without any mention of other irrelevant matters", Aleppo Deputy Ahmad Janbar writes:

The exchanged letters between the Syrian and French Governments which constitute an indivisible part of the agreement deal with the legal status of the French concessionary companies. What has this subject to do in an agreement which is said to be "confined to the liquidation of currency and financial affairs? It would be more becoming if the Government told the people that the French are making a bargain out of our debts, asking the legalization of the status of their concessionary companies which were forced on the country by the bayonets of the Mandatory in return for the liquidation of the currency affairs.

Also, Appendix "B" states in article 1 that France has the right to maintain freely some buildings. This may be accepted in respect of consulate as well as ordinary establishments buildings including the military cemetary and houses. But what has the french Government to do with the following military buildings: Armament stores and Military Rationing Department at Mazzah, Military Camps Nos. 1 and 3 and German barracks in Aleppo? Why does France want to maintain these military establishments and guarantee our recognition of its right to use them?

Furthermore, according to the agreement the Syrian Government will pay the French Government the following sums:

LS. 17,200,000	In return for French property
LS. 3,000,000	In return for war armament.
LS. 2,800,000	In return for the telephone network.

As regards the price of French property and telephone network, was a committee formed to estimate their price, or was the figure forced on us by the French without having a chance to question their demands?

NATIONAL ECONOMY MEASURES:

Barada: By a ministerial decree No. 35, dated February 28, 1949 the National Economy annuls all restrictions previously imposed on the controlled distribution of the following commodities:

1. Agricultural

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1. Agricultural machinery and spare parts.
2. Iron of all kings.
3. Timber for Constructions.
4. Glass used for buildings.
5. Cement.
6. Trucks.
7. Chemicals.
8. Passenger cars.
9. Fertilizers.
10. Potato seeds.
11. Dutch cows.

ARAB AFFAIRS

JUDEO-LEBANESE NEGOTIATIONS:

Al Sha'b: The Beirut correspondent of al Sha'b reports from very reliable sources that the Syrian Government has notified the Lebanese Government of its approval in principle to withdraw all its forces from its zone of occupation in Palestine if an armistices is signed between Lebanon and Israel. This report, according to the correspondent, has been confirmed by more than an official source.

It was declared in Egypt yesterday that the UN Conciliation Commission has extended invitations to the Arab States, other than Yaman, to a conference in Beirut on March 21.

ANY CHANGE IN ARAB POLICY:

Al Sha'b: The Prime Minister received yesterday (March1) at the Foreign Office the American and British Ministers Plenipotentiary respectively. He is reported to have conferred an hour with each. No comment is available on these meetings other than the P.M.'s recent statement

that Syria

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that Syria wishes to abandon its policy of isolation and join any regional pact which does not prejudice its sovereignty and independence and which safeguards its interests.

There are all indications that many serious problems are under discussion among the Arab capitals. The principal lines of future Arab policy is summarized by the paper as finding a final solution to the Palestine question on the basis of a fait accompli at least, and the participation of the Arab countries in the Proposed Mediterranean pact.

Alif Ba': This paper reports that Mr. Keeley, the American Minister to Syria, revisited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs few minutes before 2 p.m. in the hope of interviewing Prime Minister Khalid al 'Azm again but unfortunately H.E. the Prime Minister had unusually left earlier. A second meeting might have been arranged this very day.

US STABS WITH A HAND AND AIDS WITH THE OTHER:

AL Ayyam: under the above heading, the paper published an AFP reports from Washington that the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives has approved the allocation of $ 16 million for the relief of the Arab Refugees. The sum will be ready for expenditure as soon as the two Houses approve it.

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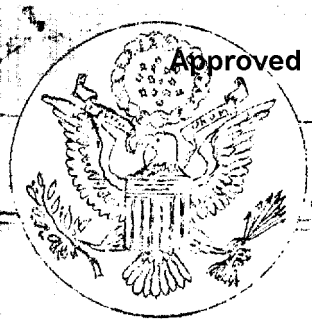

AMERICAN LEGATION

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Daily Review of the Syrian Press

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No. 42 (FOR STAFF USE ONLY)

PRESS DIGEST, THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 1949.

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NEWS-PAPERS REVIEWED:

Al Nasr, Al Fauha', Al Balad, Al Manar, Al Alem, Barada, Al Nazir, Al Shabab, Al Duha', Al Jabal, Al Insha', Al Kifah, Al Qabas, and al Dha'b.

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ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

CONTROL OF TAPLINE WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS:

Al Kifah: In a letter to the Ministry of Public Works and Communications the Director of Posts, Telegraphs, and Radio Department, Tawfi, bey al-Hayyani, has requested the revision of the TAPLINE Agreement to include terms stipulating the Syrian Government's complete control of the Company's wireless and telephone communications as well as their transmitting and receiving apparatus.

The request is under the consideration of the competent offices of the Ministry.

TAPLINE

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TAPLINE PROS & CONS:

Al Wabas: Editor Najib al-Rayyis (Deputy Damascus) frontpages in his paper a two-column article advocating approval of TAPLINE Agreement and other similar agreements to "win the battle of Economy, now that the battle of politics is lost." Under "Where can we get 150 million Pounds for our Budget," Rayyis writes in part;

If we do not profit from the transit of petroleum pipelines across our country to our or to Lebanese coast, and if we do not contract with foreign Governmentson economic matters, open our doors for Foreign traders, conclude foreign trade agreements, and look for foreign markets for our goods, where can we get the rare currency to cover our money, finance our budget and employment to laborers? We would like to inquire from those who advocate isolation, where can our Government secure 150,000,000 Pounds Syrian every year for the expenditure on the Army, Gendarmerie, Police and Security forces, Public Instruction, roads and buildings?...

Are the revenues from taxation sufficient to cover these costs, and purchase the armaments necessary for the Army?...

Two rare opportunities have been given us: Political, and Economic. Our lands and coasts have been offered to become the transit, and the terminus of the greatest anglo-American petroleum resources, and we have been charged with the protection of these pipelines. Would it be logical to lose these opportunities which will make of America and England two strong countries protecting our lands and frontiers from external aggression, mind you, not for their love to us, but for the sake of protecting their petroleum wealths? "We strongly beleive that the transit of TAPLINE pipes is much more profitable to us than the conclusion of a political agreement with U.S." he concludes.

Al 'Alam: In a three-column article a certain Muhammad Abu-al-Khayr al-Ustuwani explains that the TAPLINE is not merely a commercial firm, but a project supported by the American Government to materialize its foreign policy in the countries through which the pipelines cross. An agreement existent between the Tapline and the American Government through the Petroleum Reserve Organization presided by Mr. Harold Ikes provides that the TAPLINE reserve loc million barrels for the Government and abstain from selling petroleum to any Country unapproved of by America. The columnist here inquires if the provision in the agreement which provides

the

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the selling of 200,000 tons of crude oil to Syria can be stopped should the US Government so desires, should Syria not agree with its foreign policy.

Barada: This paper condemns the instigation of the students by some deputies to organize anti-Tapline demonstrations in the streets. The paper advises the deputies to abstain from such actions and to wait for Parliament's meeting when they will have ample time to discuss the project.

TAPLINE THREAT TO SHIFT TO HAIFA:

Barada: The NEBS Correspondent in Beirut reports that following the Anti-Tapline demonstrations recently organized in Damascus, the Company in question has threatened to move its pipelines to Haifa. The Lebanese Government is reported to have hastily contacted the Company's managers in the view of calmning them down and promising to intercede, with the Syrian Government in the hope of persuading it to urge the Parliament's ratification of the Company as soon as possible. The Sa'udi Arabian Legation in Beirut is also reported to have intervened with the Tapline Office in Beirut and asked the Company to give up its threats.

Al Sha'b : reports that the Lebanese Government has requested the Syrian to subside the uproar created in Damascus against the TAPLINE in order that the Agreement be discussed in an atmosphere of quietness.

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY OUTLINED BY MINISTER:

Al Nasr: At a press conference held Tuesday (March 1) noon and attended by correspondents of foreign papers and agencies, Minister of National Economy Munayn Bey Sahnawi made the following statements:

The Syrian Government has decided to abandon its economic isolation policy, and is striving to conclude commercial treaties with many countries on the basis of equality and mutual interests. While doing so, the Government welcomes the investment in Syria of foreign capital conclusion of Economic and commercial treaties whith certain countries is being contemplated in the light of the agreements held between those countries, so that our agreements will come out based on the possibility of export and import within the limits of the country's potentialities. Syria has received copies of these agreements and is at present considering them.

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As to economic relations with the Arab counntries, Syria has already approached them with this intention and apened talks with them. 'Iraq's commercial delegation will arrive at the beginning of next week to resume and complete the talks. Similar preparatory talks have taken place with Egypt.

Preparatory negotiations have also taken place with some European countries, among which are, France, Belgium, Greece, Czechoslovakia, and Italy, the countries have sent us copies of agreements held between them.

The Syrian Government is now preparing a huge five-year plan, the skeleton of which has already been completed. It will be studied by the Council of Ministers in anticipation of its ratification by the Chamber of Deputies. The project runs on the following lines:

1. The enlargement of the Lattakia port so as to render it suitable for import and export.

2. The establishment of a railway network joining different parts of the country, especially production and consumption regions with the Syrian ports.

3. The drying up of the marshlands, especially al-Ghab plateau - on Homs-Lattakia way - with the aim of converting 100 hectares of marshland to agricultural areas.

4. The materialization of some electrical projects on the Euphrates River in order to secure electric power for Syrian industry.

5. The materialization of big irrigation projects in order to exploit the greatest possible area of the lands situated in the north between the Euphrates river and the Jazirah.

This huge enterprise will cost 20 million Syrian pounds, and will be financed with special credits, outside the budget, through national debts and special measures.

As to Petroleum policy, the Tapline Agreement gives us 200,000 tons of crude petroleum at cost price. Anglo-Iranian Company will give us also an equal amount from the IPC which is asking for license to extend a new pipeline with terminus on the Syrian shores. This makes in all 600,000 tons. Nothing to say about the SPC whose research work is showing prospects of discovery of petroleum, which made a supervising

engineer

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engineer declare that their work was encouraging. The price of petroleum would fall from LS. 44 a ton to LS. 28 only, whcih would make an economy of LS. 12,000,000 a month (?)

These amounts of petroleum will be consumed, I hope, for the progress of Syrian industry and the materialization of agricultural plans especially in the north of Syria which is properly exploited will yield, according to experts on Syrian soil, 22,000,000 tons of cereals a year as compared with only 500,000 tons produced at present.

THE SPC has surrendered at the beginning of the previous month one-third of the area placed at its disposal by its concession, in accordance with the terms of the concession which stipulates that if the Company would not discover any resources within the first three years it will surrender one-third of the area and retain its right to research in the remaining part during the coming 25 years. The area given up lies from a point near Tripoli until the Lattakia shore.

Mr. Manhall, the American millionnaire of Lebanese origin asked for the establishment of a Syrian company to search for petroleum and exploit it in the area abandoned by the SPC in addition to the area in southern Syria on which no concession applies. The Government in reply said that 51% of the shares of the company should be owned by Syrians and the rest by foreign individuals or companies designated by Mr. Manhall himself. If Syria fails to cover 51% of the shares, the Government approved giving the balance to foreigners, on condition the Company will have Syrian nationality. Mr. Manhall will leave for America to discuss the question with his colleagues and will return within two or three months.

Negotiations with the Anglo-Iranian Company are progressing, and it is expected they will be terminated during the coming few days when the draft agreement will be submitted to Parliament for consideration side by side with the Tapline Agreement.

It is not true that groups of German experts approached the Government offerring their services to search for and exploit petroleum. While individual German experts are engaged in the various departments, no group or association was engaged in this work.

ARAB AFFAIRS.

MORE MONEY

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MORE MONEY FOR THE REFUGEES:

Al Kifah: The AL Supreme Council for Relief of the Palestinian Refugees has requested the Arab States to contribute 750,000 Egyptian Pounds to be spent on the Refugees, as the previous appropriation of 100,000 is exhausted. The contributions to be divided as follows:

315,000	Egyptian Pounds by the Egyptian Government.	
150,000	" " " "	'Iraqi Government.
120,000	" " " "	Syrian Government.
52,500	" " " "	Sa'udi Arabian Govt.
45,000	" " " "	Yamanite Government.
22,000	" " " "	Transjordan Government.
704,500	(Balance probably by Lebanon - Reviewer).	

THIS IS WHAT 'ABDALLAH HAS FOR THE ARABS:

Al Fayha': In glaring headlines, Al Fayha' to-day publishes "serious information about King 'Abdallah's plot with the Jews against the Arabs". In the article, it says the following:

Al Fayha' correspondent learns from most reliable sources that King 'Abdallah had cabled Dr. Bunche asking him to invite representatives of the Jews to a meeting at Shaunah Palace under his Majesty's chairmanship to settle matters between him and the State of Israel and to agree on certain problems before opening negotiations for an armistice. The Acting Mediator successfully exhausted all efforts to convince the Jews. The meeting was held under His Majesty's chairmanship of Friday, February 25, and was attended by a Jewish delegation headed by Moshe Dian, Military Governor of Jerusalem, and a TJ delegation headed by Lt. Col. Ahmad Sidqi al-Jundi. During the meeting, the King is reported as having been glad, active, and at ease.

The agreement arrived at in this meeting were serious and criminal, since it eradicates Palestine and all hope of the Arab peoples to regain the Holy Land. The agreement is summarized in the recognition by Israel of the attachment of the TJ and Iraqi zones of occupation in Palestine to the Hashimite Kingdom, in addition to the line stretching from Bethlehem-Hebron-Beersheba-Gaza with the area to the east and south of this line down to the Egyptian frontiers. In return, King Abdallah will recognize the annexation to Israel of Galilee and the area to the north and west of the Bethlehem-Hebron-Beersheba-Gaza line.

On this

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On this basis, the Jews and King 'Abdallah opened negotiations for permanent armistice and the reinforcement of Israel and hashimite kingdom in the Holy lands.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

SUSPICION IN SALE OF LANDS:

al Qabas: Director General of the Prime Ministry Fu"ad Mahasin, has left for Qunaytra to carry out personal inquiries into the rumors circulating around the sale of properties in the district to suspected sources.

TURKISH SOLDIERS ATTACK OUR FRONTIERS:

Barada: The H. of the Syrian Gendarmerie has been informed by telephone from the Commaner of the Jazira Gendarmerie forces that a number of Turkish army personel have crossed the Syrian border at the point of Baytrid, near Dayrik, and looted about 200 heads of sheep. A battle had been consequently entangled between the Turks and the inhabitants of the district resulting with the injury of a number of them. The case has been immediately reported to the Ministry of Interior which in turn communicated it to the Foreign Office to take the necessary action with the Turkish authorities.

WILL SYRIA GO TO RHODES?

Al Nasr: From reliable sources, al Nasr correspondent learns that the Syrian Government has not yet sent any reply to Bunche's invitation nor has it notified Lebanon of its intention to withdraw its forces from Lebanon as soon as the Jedeo-Lebanese agreement is signed.

The correspondent says that Syria's attitude is, in brief, to stand and wait, especially that the Foreign Affairs Committee in Parliament will discuss in its meeting scheduled on Saturday (March 5) morning the situation from all sides in the light of clarification and informations supplied by the Government, and will decide on the policy to be adopted in this respect.

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UNCONFIRMED RESIGNATION:

Al Nasr: Muhammad Mubarak, Deputy for Damascus, has resigned from the People's Party and from the Party's parliamentary bloc, according to Al Nasr correspondent. No confirmation could be obtained of this report from the respected deputy himself.

NATIONALIZATION OF ELECTRICITY:

AL Nasr: Upon his return from Aleppo Yesterday, the Minister of Public Works resumed his talks for the nationalization of the Electric Company in a meeting held with the Director in the presence of the Controller of Concessionary Companies. Before this meeting, the Correspondent states that the Minister had conferred for quite a long period with the Minister of Finance.

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